

exalting the merit of the strategy of the movement as compared with that of its tactics, and, as it seems to us, without having bestowed more than a superficial glance at the strategy. There was a very serious difficulty with McDowell's plan, and that was, that it directly and temptingly exposed his communications ; his antagonist could threaten his base of operations,—Centreville,—without other hindrance than that offered by the troops he had left to guard it. McDowell in fact deliberately took the risk of leaving his rear guard to maintain his base of supplies and his communications with Alexandria and Washington, and cut loose from everything, for the purpose of turning the enemy's left. So far from his army covering his base, his line of battle was actually parallel with his line of communications, and his main body was further removed from his base of supplies than was the right wing of his enemy. He did not dare to call on his reserves for reinforcements. Had the battle been a drawn battle, with the chances which (as he well knew) existed, of his adversary being largely reinforced, could he have stayed on the Henry House hill ? The question almost answers itself. There is no reason to suppose that McDowell himself did not fully appreciate the strategical defects of his plan ; but he thought

that, on the whole, he stood a better chance of success by following this course than by moving from Centreville upon the lower fords of Bull Run, and attempting to carry Ms adversary's position by direct attack. In this opinion, he may, of course, have been right; but it seems to us by no means clear that he was light.